



Department of Justice

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SEVEN DEFENDANTS EXTRADITED FROM COLOMBIA ON DRUG CHARGES

_____ Tampa, FL - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announced today that seven individuals have been extradited from Colombia after having been indicted on drug charges. Humberto Cuevas-Salazar, Edwin Alirio Periaza-Grueso, Elkin De Jesus Quintero-Jimenez, Jesus Antonio Ardila Moreno, Jorge Renteria-Cuero, Willington Estupinan-Portocarrero, Hector Fabio Garcia-Vengoechea arrived late last Friday evening and made their initial appearances yesterday and today in Tampa Federal court before United States Magistrate Judge Thomas B. McCoun, III.

Name	Age	Charges
Humberto Cuevas-Salazar a/k/a "Romoaldo," a/k/a "Inginiero," a/k/a "Romo Aldo," a/k/a "Romaldo" Faces 10 years to Life	55	-conspiracy to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine; -conspiracy to possess five kilograms or more of cocaine while on board a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States
Edwin Alirio Periaza-Grueso Faces 10 years to Life	27	-conspiracy to import into the United States five kilograms cocaine -conspiracy to manufacture and distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine -conspiracy to possess five kilograms or more of cocaine while on board a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States

Elkin De Jesus Quintero-Jimenez Faces 5 years to 40 years	39	-conspiracy to distribute more than 100 grams of heroin and more than 500 grams of cocaine
Jesus Antonio Ardila Moreno Faces 5 years to 40 years	48	-conspiracy to distribute more than 100 grams of heroin and more than 500 grams of cocaine
Jorge Renteria-Cuero Faces Faces 10 years to Life	41	-conspiracy to manufacture and distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine -conspiracy to possess five kilograms or more of cocaine while on board a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States
Willington Estupinan-Portocarrero Faces 10 years to Life	35	-conspiracy to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine -three counts of conspiracy to possess five kilograms or more of cocaine while on board a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States
Hector Fabio Garcia- Vengoechea Faces 10 years to Life	45	-two counts of conspiracy to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine

Cuevas-Salazar is accused of organizing and engineering the construction and use of semi-submersible vessels used to smuggle cocaine from Colombia to the United States.

Perelaza-Grueso is alleged to be part of a large-scale maritime cocaine transportation organization, known as 'Los Pescaditos' with a base of operations in Buenaventura, located on the west coast of Colombia. Los Pescaditos have been a highly successful maritime smuggling group for the better part of the last decade. Perelaza-Grueso is related to other leaders in the organization. The Panama Express Strike Force has linked more than seven interdictions, involving fishing vessels and go-fast operations, involving seizures ranging from two to five tons, to Los Pescaditos.

Quenter-Jimenez and Ardila-Moreno are accused of selling both cocaine and heroin to a confidential informant working with DEA in Colombia.

Renteria-Cuero was the alleged leader of a maritime cocaine smuggling organization operating from the Pacific coast of Colombia. The organization utilized both "go-fast" boats and large fishing vessels to smuggle thousands of kilograms to the United States via Mexico. Co-conspirators Jose Desidero Montenegro Jaramillo and Evert Ramirez Estupinan were previously extradited to the United States and entered pleas of guilty on January 16, 2009.

Estupinan-Portocarrero is charged with using two fishing vessels, the Lina Maria and the San Jose, to smuggle cocaine into the United States in September 2004.

Garcia-Vengohechea is alleged to be part of a large scale cocaine organization based in Colombia. Beginning at least as early as 2002, the organization allegedly trafficked and imported significant quantities of cocaine into the United States and Haiti from Colombia and Venezuela.

These investigations were the result of investigations by the Panama Express South Strike Force. Panama Express Strike Force South (PANEX) is a federally-approved Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) consisting of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the United States Coast Guard, the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Joint Interagency Task Force. The Colombian National Police also assisted, as well as the Orlando office of DEA. Operation Panama Express South currently targets Colombian maritime smuggling organizations responsible for cocaine trafficking throughout the Eastern Pacific to the United States and elsewhere for distribution. These cases will be

prosecuted by First Assistant United States Attorney A. Lee Bentley, Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Perry, Assistant United States Attorney Joseph Ruddy, Assistant United States Attorney Walter E. Furr, Assistant United States Attorney Vincent Citro and Assistant United States Attorney Julie Savell.